

The New Willard Hotel  
1401-1409 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-293

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
542-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## THE NEW WILLARD HOTEL

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Location: 1401-1409 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest corner of 14th Street, N.W. and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., running completely through the block to F Street, N.W., Washington, District of Columbia. Square 225; Lot 32.

USGS Washington West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.32597.43D7D0

Present Owner: The Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC), 425 13th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL was designed at the turn of this century by Henry J. Hardenbergh, one of the country's most noted hotel architects. It replaced the earlier "Willard Hotel" which had been built c.1833. The first two sections of the new hotel, completed in 1901 and 1904, are an adaptation of Beaux Arts eclecticism combined with Second Empire details, applied to a steel frame building. Washington architect, Walter G. Peter, repeated many of the same details when he designed the 1926 F Street addition. Both the original "Willard" and the NEW WILLARD HOTEL have a long history of entertaining Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and other important people.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: The first phase of the NEW WILLARD HOTEL was finished in 1901; the building was completed in 1904. The F Street addition was built in 1926.
2. Architect: Henry Janeway Hardenbergh from New York City was the architect for the original 1901-1904 building phases. Walter G. Peter, whose father was a principal in the Washington, D. C., firm of Marsh & Peter, was the architect for the 1926 addition.

Henry Janeway Hardenbergh was born of Dutch descent in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1847. In 1865, at the age of eighteen, he began a five year apprenticeship in the office of Detlef Lienau. Lienau, a German by birth, received his training in Germany and France, both major centers of architectural design during the early Nineteenth Century. In France he was the pupil of Henri Labrousse (1801-75). At this time architects throughout Europe were experimenting with the new building material, iron. The use of iron allowed for longer interior spans, as well as taller

buildings. The French, particularly Labrouste, were especially bold in the use of the new material. Through Lienau many of these and other European design trends were filtered to Hardenbergh.

Hardenbergh's first commissions, after leaving Lienau's tutelage, were the building for the grammar school (1870) and the chapel-library (1873) at Rutgers College in his home town. The combined chapel and library, a mixture of both English and German Gothic architecture showed the beginnings of a simplification of detail and general refinement of design that were to become hallmarks of Hardenbergh's buildings. In 1884, at a time when the introduction of steel frame construction and the further development of the elevator were allowing for still taller buildings (just as iron and fireproof construction had done earlier), Hardenbergh designed and built the DAKOTA APARTMENT HOUSE in New York City, his first major commission. As part of Hardenbergh's basic design philosophy it showed a thoughtful combination of the architectural aesthetics of composition, scale and ornament with the building's functional needs and construction. He felt it was also important to distinguish on the exterior of the building the different interior functions of the building. The DAKOTA was followed by a succession of both small and large private residences, apartment buildings, office buildings, and warehouses. Most of his projects were executed in New York City but he also did work in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and other locations.

It was the completion of the WALDORF HOTEL (1891), the MANHATTAN HOTEL (1896) and the ASTOR HOTEL (1896) (which combined with the WALDORF to become the WALDORF-ASTORIA), all in New York City, that established Henry J. Hardenbergh as a forerunner in hotel design. These hotels established the standard design mode by which buildings of this type were to be built; the building facade was divided into a base, shaft and capital. To lend the complete design a more domestic character, the capital became an elaborate cornice and roof punctuated by dormer windows, and warmer materials and colors were used both inside and out. What made Hardenbergh's designs unique were his complete understanding of Beaux Arts eclecticism and his ability to refine it into his own style. The WILLARD HOTEL (1901-1904), the PLAZA HOTEL (1906) in New York City, and Boston's COPLEY PLAZA (1912), all built at the height of Hardenbergh's career, carried this design concept into the Twentieth Century. Hardenbergh was quoted in 1906 concerning hotel design:

"... I always try to bring everything into a certain harmony. Of course, in a hotel all tastes have to be satisfied, and one must know pretty well how the space is going to be utilized before one can realize the artistic vision of the outward appearance of a building. The architect has to deal with three factors, all of equal import-

ance; first, the artistic element; second, construction; and third, interior decoration. It is just as in music, a certain "Leitmotif" should run through everything. Otherwise, it would be merely a collection of miscellaneous details, ..."

Hardenbergh was also well recognized for his support of many arts organizations. He was a member of the N. Y. Chapter of the AIA, and advanced to Fellowship (FAIA) in 1897. Also active in the Architectural League of New York, he held the office of President in 1901. He was elected to the Association of the National Academy of Design in 1910, and was one of the founders of both the American Fine Arts Society and New York's Municipal Art Society. Henry Janeway Hardenbergh died in 1918 at the age of 71.

3. Original Owner: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL was built for and owned by Joseph E. Willard of the Virginia Hotel Company of Washington, D. C.

The Record of Deeds is as follows:

RECORD  
OF  
DEEDS

SQUARE 225 - LOT 32

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1900 | Deed in Trust, March 31, 1900, recorded in Liber 2458, Folio 361.<br>Joseph E. Willard et ux to Joseph J. Darlington et. al. Trs.                   |
| 1900 | Deed in Trust, April 3, 1900, recorded in Liber 2481, Folio 256.<br>Joseph J. Darlington et. al. Trs. to the Fidelity Ins. Trust & Safe Deposit Co. |
| 1901 | Deed, March 11, 1901, recorded in Liber 2565, Folio 86.<br>Joseph E. Willard et ux to Frank S. Bright, Tr.  |
| 1901 | Deed, March 11, 1901, recorded in Liber 2565, Folio 89.<br>Frank S. Bright, Tr. to Belle L. Wyatt Willard.  |
| 1902 | Deed in Trust, July 15, 1902, recorded in Liber 2657, Folio 486.<br>Joseph E. Willard et ux to Joseph J. Darlington et. al. Trs.                    |
| 1905 | Deed, August 28, 1905, recorded in Liber 2876, Folio 85.<br>Christina V. N. Callan (widow) to Henry A. Willard.                                     |

- 1922 Deed, June 20, 1922, recorded in Liber 4710,  
Folio 497.  
Edward J. Stellwagon, Surv. Tr. to The Virginia Hotel  
Company.
- 1923 Deed, December 13, 1923, recorded in Liber 5114,  
Folio 303.  
Belle L. Wyatt Willard to The Virginia Hotel Company.
- 1946 Deed, April 4, 1946, recorded in Liber 8244,  
Folio 391.  
The Virginia Hotel Company to Maxwell Abbell et. al.
- 1951 Deed, June 18, 1951, recorded in Liber 9493,  
Folio 110.  
Maxwell Abbell, et ux, et. al. to Lee Benbrook.
- 1951 Deed, June 18, 1951, recorded in Liber 9493,  
Folio 114.  
Lee Benbrook to Maxwell Abbell, et. al. (Joint Tenants).
- 1951 Deed, November 29, 1951, recorded in Liber 9603,  
Folio 109.  
Maxwell Abbell, et ux, et. al. to Lee Benbrook.
- 1951 Deed, November 29, 1951, recorded in Liber 9603,  
Folio 113.  
Lee Benbrook to Maxwell Abbell, et. al.
- 1961 Deed, September 29, 1961, recorded in Liber 11676,  
Folio 585.  
Fannie E. Abbell, et. al., surviving joint tenants to  
Mary Marsh.
- 1961 Deed, September 29, 1961, recorded in Liber 11677,  
Folio 51.  
Mary Marsh to Charles B. Benenson, et. al., tenants  
in common.
- 1962 Deed, April 9, 1962, recorded in Liber 11779, Folio 381.  
Charles B. Benenson, et ux to Howell Corporation, et. al.,  
tenants in common, 1/2 int.
- 1968 Deed, July 15, 1968, recorded in Liber 12899,  
Folio 320.  
Fannie E. Abbell, et. al. Surv. Trs. to 1401 Realty  
Corporation, et. al.
- 1969 Deed, May 19, 1969, recorded in Liber 12994,  
Folio 458.  
1401 Realty Corporation to Charles B. Benenson.
- 1969 Deed, May 19, 1969, recorded in Liber 12994,  
Folio 462.  
Howell Corporation to Charles B. Benenson.

In January, 1978 the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation purchased the building from Charles B. Benenson.

4. Builder, contractor: The 1901 and 1904 phases of the building were built by the George A. Fuller Company of Washington, D. C. (Permit No. 1386 for \$550,000 and Permit No. 926 for \$564,000) with Purdy and Henderson of New York City, as consulting engineers. The 1926 addition was also built by the George A. Fuller Company of Washington, D. C. (Permit No. 2443 for \$400,000) with Thomas W. Marshall of Washington, D. C., civil engineer.
5. Original Plans and Construction: Partial plans and building sections of the 1901 and 1904 phases of the WILLARD HOTEL are available in print form on record at the National Archives, Natural Resources Department, Washington, D. C.
6. Alterations and Additions: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL was planned to be constructed in two phases so that part of the old "Willard Hotel" would be able to continue operations. The first section, facing Pennsylvania Avenue and running up to and including the middle pavilion on 14th Street, was completed in October 1901. The second section, continuing up 14th Street to F Street was completed in 1904. An addition on F Street in 1926 extended that facade 50' in two wings to the west of the original buildings. This added 61 rooms to the original 389. At about the same time that the F Street addition was built, the pedimented dormer windows with hooded circular windows above were removed and the large ballroom windows were added, altering a great deal of the slate mansard roof. A restaurant entry was also cut through to the basement from the Pennsylvania Avenue, 14th Street corner at this time (Permit No. 8704). The building was painted a uniform light grey to match the limestone base around 1957.

#### B. Historical Context:

Both the site and the present building have a long history of entertaining Presidents, statesmen and other important people. In 1816 John Tayloe built six three-story buildings at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street to be used as private residences. As early as 1818, however, at least one of them was leased as a hotel. For the next twenty-nine years the buildings housed a number of hotel establishments. During this time the building that became the original hotel was built. In 1847 Henry A. and Edwin D. Willard came to Washington to lease what was by then the 40 room old CITY HOTEL from the owner Benjamin O. Tayloe. At this time the name was changed to the "Willard Hotel". Two years later Edwin left and was replaced by brother Joseph C. Willard. Henry and Joseph continued to lease the property until 1853, when they purchased it from the Tayloe family and extended the building up 14th Street. In 1858, with the purchase of the property at 14th and F Streets and the further extension of the building, the "Willard Hotel" now had 100 rooms. Management problems arose, however, and in 1883, Joseph bought his brother Henry's interest in the business.

Located only a block from the White House the "Willard" was host to a variety of people. When the Japanese Treaty Embassy made its first visit to the United States in 1860 it stayed at the "Willard". In 1861, the last Peace Conference prior to the outbreak of the Civil War was held at the "Willard". Julia Ward Howe, a guest in 1861, wrote the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" while staying there.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, covering the Civil War for the Atlantic Monthly, wrote:

"This hotel, in fact, may be much more justly called the center of Washington and Union than either the Capital, the White House or the State Department.... You exchange nods with governors of sovereign States; you elbow illustrious men, and tread on the toes of generals; you hear statesmen and orators speaking in their familiar tones. You are mixed up with office-seekers, wire-pullers, inventors, artists, poets, prosers...you adopt the universal habit of the place and call for a mint-julip, a whiskey-skin, a gin-cocktail, a brandy-mash or a glass of pure old Rye, for the conviviality of Washington sets in at an early hour and all these drinks are continually in request by almost all these people."

An ever increasing demand for hotel space prompted Joseph's son, Joseph E. Willard, to make plans for a new hotel. He waited, however, until his father's death in 1897. The first phase of the NEW WILLARD HOTEL opened in 1901, with tremendous fanfare.

"Another Washington hotel acknowledged to be the most modern and lavishly equipped of them all, will open its doors to the public this evening at six o'clock... appointments are all of the best character."

(Washington Post, October 15, 1901)

The 1904 section further expanded the entertainment and boarding facilities of the hotel. Presidents Roosevelt through Nixon frequented the hotel, and Vice Presidents Marshall, Coolidge and Dawes lived there during their terms in office. In 1917-1918 the hotel was the headquarters for the delegations to the Disarmament Conference after World War I. The building became a National Historic Site in 1927. In 1946 the Willard family sold the hotel to Maxwell Abbell of Chicago, a hotel chain owner. At this time the "New" was dropped from the name of the hotel. The hotel continued to draw important guests as well as travelers to Washington until it closed its doors in 1968.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL is a revival of the French Second Empire style, one of the many revival styles that grew out of the Beaux Arts period. It was built in three stages over a twenty-five year period. The original 1901 structure was the first of two phases, the second phase being completed in 1904. The building's well articulated elevations are skillfully composed both vertically and horizontally into tripartite facades, with a prominent angled corner treatment at Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street. The 1926 addition altered the symmetry of the F Street facade but continued the horizontality of the composition.
2. Condition of Fabric: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL has been vacant and neglected for twelve years. Roof leaks, deterioration of roofing materials, flashing materials and gutter systems have led to severe deterioration of some exterior surfaces and much of the interior. A preliminary structural investigation prepared in 1977 by KCE Structural Engineers, PC, of Washington, D. C. for the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation states that the WILLARD is basically sound.

### B. Description of Exterior

1. Over-all Dimensions: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL completely fills its basically rectangular site. The building fronts 139' on Pennsylvania Avenue, 309' on 14th Street and 129' on F Street. The site slopes a full story between F Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, from which point it measures 160' to the top of its mansard roof, a total of thirteen stories.
2. Foundations: The 1901 and 1904 building foundations are reinforced concrete tiered and spread footings on solid fill. The 1926 addition's foundations are reinforced concrete spread footings.
3. Walls: The facades are divided both vertically and horizontally in a tripartite manner. Horizontally, the three-story base (two stories on F Street) is of rusticated Indiana limestone capped by a plain frieze and cornice at the sills of the second story windows. The base of the 1926 addition has rusticated limestone piers separating the three bays. An additional cornice at the third story sill line further emphasizes the division of the base from the shaft of the composition. The middle section, or shaft, of the building, now painted light gray, is of light colored brick. Every seventh course has been recessed to give a rusticated appearance to this section of the facade. The eighth story marks the start of the elaborate capital. Full story limestone consoles support the first of two glazed terra cotta cornices. This cornice



in turn supports a wrought iron railing that encircles all the street facades at the ninth story. Another less ornate cornice is above the ninth story windows. A mansard roof provides the final crown for the capital of the WILLARD HOTEL's tripartite composition.

Vertically, the Pennsylvania Avenue facade is divided into three sections; a three bay central section flanked by two bay end pavilions that project slightly from the central section. The edges of the pavilions are further defined by quoins. The facade is accentuated by a three story Doric portico at the center entrance.

The chamfered corner at Pennsylvania Avenue and Fourteenth Street is organized vertically in the same manner as the other facades though it is only one bay wide.

The Fourteenth Street facade is centered on a two bay projecting pavilion flanked by symmetrical five bay sections. These sections are then flanked by projecting three-bay pavilions at each corner. Again, the edges of the pavilions are further defined by quoins. The pavilions project out enough from the two five-bay sections to accommodate windows at each side.

The F Street facade had its symmetry altered when the 1926 addition was built. This facade was originally centered on a three-bay recessed section that was flanked by one-bay, end pavilions. Most of the surface of the shaft section of these pavilions is flat, lacking the rusticated appearance of the center portion of this facade and the shaft sections of the other facades. The rustication does, however, wrap partway around the corners to give the impression of quoins. The center section is highlighted by a two-story re-cessed entry.

The 1926 addition is primarily speckled, buff colored brick laid in running bond without the characteristic rusticated shaft. The ten story facade retains the two story limestone base, second story brick rustication, and the heavy eighth story cornice and consoles. It lacks, however, the mansard roof line, ending instead with a simple parapet wall, a continuation of the final cornice and parapet of the 1901-04 buildings.

The flat, brick alley/courtyard facade is laid in running bond. It has the same roof line and proportions of the 14th Street facade, but it lacks any ornamentation save for sections of the cornice between each of the ballroom windows. A two story structure, part of the 1901 phase of the building is located in the courtyard. The 1926 wings, also of unornamented brickwork, are separated by a light court five stories high.

4. Structural system, framing: The 1901 and 1904 phases of the NEW WILLARD HOTEL are steel frame, both riveted and bolted. The mansard roof is framed with elliptical steel arches spanning the width of the tenth floor. All exterior walls are of structural clay tile that has been plastered at the inside wall, and has been faced with gray granite to the grade line, cut Indiana limestone to the sill line of the second floor, and buff colored brick to the topmost cornice line. All interior partitions are of structural clay tile plastered on both sides. The floor system is composed of flat clay tile arches topped with lightweight concrete fill. Soffit tiles have been applied to the bottom of the clay tiles and then plastered directly on this surface. The roof has structural clay tile applied to the exterior of the steel framing with the final roofing material over that. The 1926 addition is also of steel frame construction but all structural members are encased in concrete. The floor system is of reinforced concrete but all exterior building systems are similar to the original building.
5. Porches, Balconies: The entrance of the Pennsylvania Avenue facade is accented by a three story Doric portico. The cornice of the portico continues the cornice line above the first floor windows of the main building facade. A limestone balustrade sits on top of the cornice. Four large limestone urns rest on the pedestals of the balustrade and accent the columns below.  
  
The five bay recessed sections of the 14th Street facade have the same balustrade and urns above the first floor cornice. This narrow balcony is the depth of the projecting pavilions and has a quarry tile floor.  
  
The center three-bay section of the F Street facade is highlighted by a two-story Palladian opening that leads to the recessed entry doors. Two pairs of Ionic columns divide the opening into its three parts. The columns carry an entablature across the center. Its cornice is a continuation of the main cornice line above the first floor windows.  
  
A narrow balcony with a limestone balustrade at the third floor accents this recessed center bay.  
  
Curved wrought iron balconies supported by the scroll keystones of the windows below mark the first floor pavilion windows of the Pennsylvania Avenue facade and all the first floor windows of the 14th Street facade, except for the northern end pavilion. Similar balconies mark the third floor windows of the three major facades.
6. Chimneys: Two boiler flues were built adjacent to each other on the courtyard side at the juncture of the 1901 and 1904 buildings. Their exterior appearance is that of a single shaft. This brick shaft rises above the roof of the hotel and has two cornices at the twelfth story. Above that, each

face of the shaft has two recessed arched panels. Two more cornices are above these, topped by a slate hipped roof open at the center.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: The three Pennsylvania Avenue entry doors were originally varnished red oak with six-light casement transom windows above. These doors have since been replaced with stock aluminum doors and frames. The entries have cut limestone architraves that are accented by simple paterae. A pulvinated frieze completes the entry entablatures.

The basement entrance at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street was cut after the building was completed. This doorway has a simple limestone jack arch. The original Ladies Entrance on 14th Street has a plain spandrel above it. Its original doors and frames have been replaced with stock aluminum ones.

As with all the entry doors, those of the F Street facade have been replaced with stock aluminum doors. The three sets of entry doors, recessed from the main facade plane, are separated by two-story pilasters. A new aluminum and wood door and storefront have replaced the ground floor window of the western pavilion of the 1904 building. Within the recessed entry of the 1926 addition is one of two original sets of two-story bronze entry doors with transom windows above. The other door and transom have since been replaced with aluminum items.

- b. Windows: The ground floor and mezzanine level windows on the Pennsylvania Avenue facade, at the angled corner, and on the south pavilion of the 14th Street facade are divided by decorative terra-cotta spandrels. These spandrels separate the paired one-over-one double-hung windows of the mezzanine level from the single one-over-one double-hung windows below. The rusticated limestone jack arches have scrolled keystones. This same arch detail repeats itself for the ground floor windows along the 14th Street facade until the northern most pavilion. The masonry opening contains a single window unit with one-over-one double-hung sash and a single pane casement transom above. Aluminum sash has replaced the original sash. These windows, as well as the ground floor windows of the Pennsylvania Avenue facade, have been boarded over. Following the slope of the sidewalk, the lower portion of some of these 14th Street windows and the basement windows below were filled in with concrete when the vaulted area under 14th Street was filled in.

On the Pennsylvania Avenue facade and all but the north pavilion of the 14th Street facade, the first floor window opening is surrounded by a simple classical architrave. Curved wrought iron balconies further accent the one-over-

one double hung windows. An ornate round window located in the center bay of the south pavilion of the 14th Street facade, alters this pattern somewhat. The three first floor window openings over the entry doors of Pennsylvania Avenue lack the classical architrave and have a wrought iron railing flush with the facade plane rather than a balcony. Within each of these openings is a set of three one-over-one double hung windows.

The north pavilion of the 14th Street facade, and the F Street facade lack the mezzanine level apparent on the remainder of the 14th Street facade and on Pennsylvania Avenue facade. Terra cotta spandrels separate the ground floor windows from the first floor windows of the F Street facade. Most ground floor and first floor sash have been replaced with modern aluminum storefronts. A wide, recessed storefront has replaced the original narrow ground floor window of the east pavilion. Its single pair of one-over-one double hung first floor windows still exists. The first floor windows within the recessed F Street entry vestibule are the original paired one-over-one double hung windows.

At one time, the ground floor windows of the north pavilion of the 14th Street facade had the same spandrels as found on the F Street and Pennsylvania Avenue facades. The sash and spandrels have since been replaced with aluminum sash and hoods.

From the second through the ninth floors, the windows become more and more simple in detail as they move up the facade. They all have one-over-one double hung sash. Each eighth floor window is a pair of double hung sash. The Pennsylvania Avenue facade and the whole of the 14th Street facade share the same window treatment. The limestone architraves of the second floor windows are similar to those of the first floor windows. The windows of the third floor all have pedimented hoods supported at each end by scroll brackets. The windows of the projecting pavilions have triangular pediments, while those of the recessed sections are segmental. A curved wrought iron balcony is at each of these windows. Like the first floor windows, those of the fourth floor have a simple classical limestone architrave. A terra-cotta scroll keystone within the rusticated brick jack arch is the only ornamentation on the fifth and sixth floor windows. The seventh floor has only the rusticated brick jack arch. All three floors have limestone sills. Large, full story consoles flank the window openings of the eighth floor. The ninth floor windows lack any ornamentation at all. The openings are simply punched into the flat brick surface.

The second through ninth floor window pattern of the 1904 portion of the F Street facade varies somewhat from that of the Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street facades. The most striking difference is the three story metal bay window in the center of this facade. This includes the third through sixth floor windows with three one-over-one double-hung windows per floor. The second floor windows of the projecting pavilions have the same ornament as the other facades. The two windows that flank the center arched opening of the center section, however, do not. These windows have a rusticated brick jack arch with a scroll keystone. The third floor windows have the same details as do the remainder of the third floor windows. All the pediments are triangular. The fourth through seventh floor windows of the projecting pavilions and the fourth floor windows of the center portion have the same simple classical architrave as is found on the Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street facades. The fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth floor windows of the center portion of the facade have the same treatment as their counterparts on the other facades, except for the center window of the seventh floor. Three smaller one-over-one double-hung windows have replaced the single window opening here.

Except for overall height of each window opening, the window pattern of the 1926 addition is completely different. A pair of one-over-one double hung windows are within each masonry opening of the 1926 addition. At the second floor level they are set within the rusticated brick surface of the facade with little additional embellishment. The remainder of the openings are simply punched into the flat brick surface of the wall. The only ornament is the same shallow balcony and wrought iron railing that is typical of all of the third story windows, and the large consoles typical of all the eighth story windows.

Small unadorned windows align themselves vertically to either the right or left side of the second through ninth floor windows on the projecting pavilions of the F Street facade, the recessed bays and center pavilion of the 14th Street facade, and the Pennsylvania Avenue facade.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL has a convex mansard roof covered with slate shingles up to a cornice of ornamental metal flashing. A built-up roofing system covers the shallow arch roof above this cornice. The roof of the 1926 addition is basically a flat surface covered with clay tile set in roofer's cement.
- b. Cornice, eaves, parapets: Four major cornices ring the three main facades of the WILLARD. The first cornice, made of terra cotta, is carried by the heads of the first floor

windows. It acts as the sill for the second floor windows. This cornice and the one above it at the third floor sill line mark the transition between the base and the shaft of the facade composition. The most prominent cornice is at the ninth floor level. It is supported by the large ornate consoles that flank each of the eighth floor windows. A wrought iron railing runs along the top of the cornice forming a balcony for the ninth floor. Two small cornice lines, one about a third of the way down the consoles, and one that forms the sills of the eighth floor windows also encircle the building. A fourth cornice separates the parapet wall from the main wall surface and runs along the top of the entire building, including the 1926 addition.

- c. Dormers and towers: The typical two-story dormer windows at each facade (three on Pennsylvania Avenue, three on 14th Street and one on F Street) are of carved limestone. Paired Doric pilasters accent the lower story. They flank a twelve-over-twelve double-hung window and support a full entablature. An upper story circular window is surrounded by a semicircular hood. The hood is supported by ornate consoles to each side. Smaller arched dormers at the Pennsylvania Avenue facade are paired between the two-story dormers. These dormers have simple semicircular hoods.

The central two-story dormer on the F Street facade is somewhat different from those on the Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street facades. It is wider and has two nine-over-nine double hung windows instead of the single window. Small bullseye windows with circular surrounds flank this dormer. The one-story dormers centered over each pavilion are also composed of a nine-over-nine double-hung window flanked by single Doric pilasters which support a segmental pediment. The recessed portions of the 14th Street facade each have five ballroom windows. These windows replaced a series of smaller pedimented dormers and bullseye windows.

The tower at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street has a center dormer with a segmental pediment supported by Doric pilasters to each side of the six-over-six light double-hung window. To each side of the tower roof is a bullseye window with a semi-circular hood.

#### C. Description of the Interior:

- 1. Floor Plans: A notice in a local newspaper in 1901 proclaimed:

##### THE NEW WILLARD

Opens this evening. European Plan. Fireproof.  
Restaurant, garden, men's cafe. Music for dinner  
and after theatre. F. S. Hight, Manager, formerly  
of the Waldorf-Astoria, New York.

- a. The Basement level originally contained approximately 48,500 square feet of area including the vaulted space under Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street. In 1972 the 15,000 square feet of vaulted space was filled in. Storage and work areas of the hotel as well as some public service areas and the hotel's main kitchen are located in the basement.
- b. The Ground Floor completely covers the lot area with 33,489 square feet of space. It contains the Main Lobby and its service rooms off Pennsylvania Avenue with smaller entry areas off 14th Street and Peacock Alley, the main corridor that connects the Pennsylvania Avenue Lobby with the F Street Lobby. The Ladies Lounge is located within the tower area on the ground floor and the mezzanine level directly above. Several large public rooms open off Peacock Alley. The first room, to the right going toward the F Street lobby, is the Willard Room, the original main dining room for the hotel. Following this is the Crystal Room, a large function or multipurpose room. To the left of Peacock Alley is the Congressional Room, a large public room, originally called the Palm Court, and the Fairfax Room, a smaller function or multipurpose room. These two rooms are located in the two story section on the courtyard side of the building. A staircase in Peacock Alley leads up to the F Street lobby. Service areas are located beneath this lobby as well as between the Willard and Crystal Rooms and next to the Fairfax Room.
- c. The Mezzanine level contains approximately 13,000 square feet of floor area located around and opening into the Main Lobby.
- d. The First Floor is of approximately 23,100 square feet and contains several public rooms as well as a central corridor with meeting rooms and guest rooms opening off it.
- e. The typical hotel room levels, floors two through nine, are comprised of approximately 27,850 square feet each and contain 53 guest rooms, including suites, and related service facilities.
- f. The tenth floor contains approximately 23,000 square feet that is largely occupied by the Banquet Room along the Pennsylvania Avenue axis, the Grand Ballroom, along the Fourteenth Street axis, and a kitchen and service rooms along the F Street axis. Balconies spanning one end of the ballroom and the Banquet Room contain almost 4,400 square feet of area.
- g. The attic, or eleventh floor is primarily used for mechanical and electrical equipment. It contains approximately 9,000 square feet of usable space.
- h. Hotel corridors and elevator lobbies are wide and gracious throughout the building.

2. Stairways: Two main stairways located at opposite ends of the building plan in the entrance lobbies connect all floors from the basement to the 11th floor. Each is a comfortably proportioned, open well staircase with wide, white marble treads, ornate cast-iron balusters and wide, wooden handrails. A circular stair provides access to the mezzanine level above what was the Ladies Lounge. Additional service stairs serve both the west side of the 1901 section off Pennsylvania Avenue and the south wing of the 1926 addition. Various other stairs providing floor to floor access as well as attic access are scattered throughout the building.
3. Interior Finishes: Because of the intricate nature of the public spaces it would be impossible to have a clear understanding of the interior if their descriptions were divided into pieces. As a result each room shall be described as a whole.
  - a. Main Lobby: This spacious room has retained its original function as that of a grand entry for a grand hotel. A magazine article of 1902 describing the lobby noted that the walls were originally Venetian red and the Composite capitals originally painted gold. All of the interior finishes, though in badly deteriorated condition, reflect this elegance. The floor of the Main Lobby is mosaic tile laid in an intricate pattern. Six Composite order columns, symmetrically placed, divide the room spacially into four bays on the east-west axis and three bays on the north-south axis. They are painted to simulate a warm yellow marble. Each of the four walls has two fluted pilasters on axis with the columns. They are painted in a similar manner and have the same Composite Capital. The corners of the lobby are accentuated by a quarter pilaster with only a single volute exposed. Like the exterior facades, the interior wall surface is divided into three parts. Each of the full height Composite pilasters rests on the base, a yellow marble wainscot. The smooth wall surface becomes the shaft and has shorter Doric pilasters and columns flanking openings to other rooms. A full entablature separates the shaft from the elaborate capital. While the classical detailing is the same on all the walls, the treatment of the door openings and the semi-circular arched mezzanine openings above differs on each wall. The overall design of each bay is a Palladian motif.

The east and west wall had similar treatments although some of the openings have been greatly altered from their original appearance. The bay to the left of the registration desk located on the west wall has intact the original design for the openings of this wall. The pilasters carry a full entablature which spans the entire width of the bay. A semi-circular arched mezzanine opening rests on a pedestal on top of the entablature. Half pilasters which have the appearance of being behind the full height



Composite pilasters complete the Palladian design. A simple architrave with crossettes surrounds the actual door opening. A bead and reel molding interrupted by flat paterae above each pilaster capital decorates the otherwise flat frieze. The moldings of the cornice, the pedestals, the architrave of the arched opening, and the spandrels have a simple classical profile. The arched opening has a pair of French doors, which open into the mezzanine space. The remaining two bays have had openings punched into the wall surface and the pilasters removed, thus destroying the Palladian design. The arched opening of the third bay to the right of the registration desk has been filled in and now has HVAC grilles in it. Each of the door openings of the east wall has a different treatment from that of the west wall. The arched openings, however, are the same. Two elevator doors and an electrical panel are located in the left bay of this wall. The opening of the center bay is the full width of the Doric pilasters. Slightly shorter pilasters that run all the way to the floor carry another smaller entablature just underneath the main entablature. This provides an additional framing element for the door. The opening of the right bay has been made smaller and is now off center.

The Pennsylvania Avenue entrance doors have a more elaborate Palladian treatment than either the east or west walls. The entablature no longer spans between the Doric pilasters, and the window sash no longer has the characteristic semi-circular arch. Instead, the top of each sash of the transom frame has a cyma recta curve with an elaborate cartouche at the center. The extreme right bay is treated the same as the east and west walls, except that a large window has been substituted for the door.

On the opposite walls, columns rather than pilasters define the shaft of the composition; there is no wall surface behind the columns. The full entablature is broken only at the entrance to Peacock Alley. Here, marble steps lead through an open archway into the Alley. The mezzanine openings are like those of the east and west walls.

Paneled beams that run in both directions are carried by the columns and pilasters. Within the square formed by the beams are a series of molded concentric squares. The center square is further divided into four coffers with an octagonal coffer in the middle. A floral medallion is in the center of the octagonal coffer. Bits of trompe l'oeil painting are still evident in the square coffers. The ceiling moldings are painted in colors that range from browns to ochres to a buff.

A yellow marble registration desk projects into the Main Lobby at the west end of the space. The wainscot and columns match the desk.

- b. F Street Lobby: This lobby is much smaller than the Main Lobby and is oriented more to the two retail spaces that open on the east and the west sides, and to the stairs that lead down to Peacock Alley. The plaster walls around the interior storefronts and the center portion of the south wall are deeply scored, resembling the rustication of the exterior facades. A deeply molded panel is centered over each of the storefront doors. Similar panels line the walls of the staircase down to Peacock Alley. Two pilasters, located in the middle of the east and west walls, carry an elaborate array of fascias, decorative bands, garlands, and moldings that make up the ceiling cornice. A shallow pressed metal coffered ceiling covers the original coffered ceiling. Heavy scrolled brackets on the south wall support the paneled beam that frames the entry to the stairs down to Peacock Alley. An archway at the bottom of these stairs is highlighted by a large plaster cartouche. Under layers of mastic and linoleum, and still evident in some areas, is the original mosaic tile floor.
- c. Peacock Alley: This interior walkway runs the entire length of the building connecting the Main Lobby with the F Street Lobby. Several public and service rooms open off this alley. The floors continue the mosaic tile of both the Main Lobby and the F Street Lobby. Pilasters that carry paneled, wooden beams divide Peacock Alley into ten bays. Each pilaster mass consists of three layers of pilasters and has an elaborate capital. The ceilings are now painted a pale blue and the walls and pilasters are now ivory. A white marble base runs the entire length of the walls. At about nine feet off the floor, a wide molding runs between each pilaster. Each bay of the east wall of Peacock Alley has a segmentally arched window above this molding and a wide door opening below. In some cases the window has been covered but a ghost is readily apparent. The doorways have a simple architrave. The second and third bays from the F Street end of the west wall of the alley have operable casement windows. Doors, like those on the east wall, open to the various public and service rooms.
- d. Willard Room: This was the main dining room of the hotel when it was built in 1901. It later became a bar and lounge. It is a long, narrow room, the long axis running north to south. Eight columns, located about 10' in from both the east and west walls divide these walls and the ceiling into five bays. The shorter north and south walls are divided into five bays, the end bays being narrower than the three center bays. Each ceiling bay, divided by deep, paneled wooden beams that span the short dimension only, is laid out with an intricate series of panels and a center medallion. An elaborate schedule of paint colors further adds to the richness of the ceiling. The eight dark green columns are painted to look like marble. The Ionic capitals are painted

gold. Pilasters, on center with the columns, divide the east and west wall surfaces into five bays. Centered within each bay of all the walls is a segmentally arched opening surrounded by a wooden architrave. On the east elevation, these architraves frame one-over-one double-hung windows. Each window has a low sill and a pair of operable casement transoms. On the west wall the architrave provides a frame for a door and multi-light transom (many of which have been covered up), divided by a wide, paneled, wooden transom bar. The doors were originally oak French doors with six lights per panel. On the north wall, the architrave of the left two bays and the bay second from the right frame a similar door and transom. On the south wall, only the second bay from the left has a complete architrave which frames the doorway into what was once the Ladies Lounge. It has the same paneled transom bar and transom as the other doors do. The remainder of the bays of the south wall have a framed opening only above the line of the wainscot. The architrave frames a blind opening. An elaborate dark wooden wainscot at one time ran around the entire perimeter of the room to about 8' off the floor. It has been removed from the north and south walls. A very deep ceiling cornice, resting on top of the pilasters circles the room. The colors of this room are dark greens, browns and gold. It has a hardwood floor.

- e. Crystal Room: This elaborate room is part of the 1904 building phase and increased the dining area of the hotel. It is roughly the same size as the Willard Room. Like the Willard Room, eight columns, again 10' in from the east and west walls, divide these walls and the ceiling into five bays. Deep, paneled wooden beams spanning in both directions, are carried by the columns and two of the four pilasters which are located on both the north and south walls. The eight columns, originally painted to look like cream colored marble, are now a very dark brown. The stylized column capitals are decorated with acanthus leaves. Alternating sheaves of wheat and simple paterae adorn the necking. The capitals of the pilasters are similar except that they lack the sheaves of wheat on the necking. A decorated frieze and an elaborate cornice molding are carried by the pilasters. A series of plaster moldings including bands of bay leaf bundles outline the center ceiling panels. The smaller ceiling panels along the east and west walls have a simpler cornice molding and a round garland that surrounds a shallow dome.

Centered within each bay of the east and west walls are segmentally arched openings with simple architrave frames. On the east wall these frame windows that have now been boarded over, but were like those in the Willard Room. On the west wall they frame door openings. A paneled transom bar and twelve light transom is above the door. Between these openings, on both the east and west walls, little

remains of the original ornamentation. There once were large wall mirrors topped by a cornice decorated with garlands and cartouche. Both the north and the south wall each had four pilasters that divided the wall into five bays. None of these remain on the south wall and only two remain on the north wall. All previous finishes have been removed and the bare clay tile and brick walls are now exposed. The floors in this room are also tongue-and-groove hardwood strips.

- f. Congressional Room: The 1901 phase of this building included a "Palm Court" with Pompeian ornamentation across the hall from the main dining room. This court included a large domed skylight, thirteen feet in height. When the 1904 phase was constructed another half-bay was added to the room. These spaces make up the Congressional Room. The skylight has since been removed and the opening covered. The ceiling ornamentation is divided into four bays spanning the short dimension (east-west) of the room. The two end ceiling bays are divided into three rectangular panels edged with bay leaf garlands. The wide center bay where the skylight is located still has the ornamental cornice that was at the base of the skylight. This decorative cornice is composed of an egg-and-dart molding, a bead and reel molding, dentil molding, two plain fascias and a double quilloche at the very edge of the ceiling. Small square rose medallions decorate the beams. The beams are paired for the depth of the room and rest on paired, fluted Ionic pilasters. An additional pair of pilasters is at the center of the large bay. A deep ceiling cornice circles the room. Another simple string course circles the room at approximately nine feet above the floor level. All the wall baseboards have been removed.

The small mechanical room off the alcove to the Congressional Room still contains the full ceiling cornice but has been cut for the new east wall. An existing skylight remains as evidence of an additional public room. This skylight has been boarded over, yet much of the glazing still remains.

- g. Grand Ballroom: The original 1901 ballroom was extended when the 1904 building phase was completed. Early photographs show that each of the nine elliptical vaulted bays rested on a full cornice supported by slender, paired fluted Corinthian columns. The center line of each bay was highlighted by paneling. The windows were smaller and had large circular windows above. The east elevation included a center pavilion with a fake balcony above and bandstand below. The north and south elevations were three bays wide with one arched opening per bay and projecting balconies the width of each elevation. The ballroom was renovated in the mid 1920's with great modifications. The north balcony was divided into three separate balconies. The south balconies were removed altogether and the upper part of the arched openings closed. The Corinthian columns

were encased to look like paneled pilasters. Large twelve-over-twelve double-hung windows with twelve-light sidelights replaced the existing windows. Four-light transoms are over the sidelights and an eight light transom is over the center double-hung window. Most of the oak parquet floor has been removed exposing the wooden subfloor.

- h. Banquet Room: This room is similar in character and detail to the remodeled Grand Ballroom. Elliptical vaults divide the space into five bays. Three arched openings on the west wall lead into a smaller room. A small mezzanine is at the east end of the room. Mirrored pilasters carry the vaults at the north and south walls. The cornice at the spring line of the vaults is the same as that in the Ballroom. Here too, the oak parquet floor is gone, leaving the wooden subfloor exposed.
- i. Guest Room Floors: The guest room floors vary only in the treatment of the corner suites at Pennsylvania Avenue. Typical rooms range from approximately 10' x 18' to 15' x 22' with ceiling heights varying from 11'-3" to 13'-3". Window sills are low with wooden shutters folded into the hardwood jambs. Most rooms have a bathroom and large closet along one wall with a small window in the bathroom. Millwork and window shutters vary from the 1901 phase to the 1904 phase; oak was used in the 1901 section and cherry in the 1904 section. The 1-3/4" - 2" hardwood 5 panel doors with transoms above still remain. Guest room ceilings are coved in the 1901 and 1904 sections and flat in the 1926 addition. The guest rooms, corridors and all other rooms have tongue-and-groove wood subflooring in the 1901 building section and lightweight concrete topping in the 1904 and 1926 building sections. Finish flooring in the guest rooms and corridors is carpet with an additional hardwood parquet border in the corridors. The carpet is badly deteriorated and non-existent in some areas. The kitchen flooring at the tenth floor is of quarry tile.

The large suites located at the southeast corner of the hotel vary in plan from floor to floor from circular, to oval, to octagonal. Each plan has a different window niche and the doors curve to fit the curve of the walls. Special attention was given to these rooms because of their magnificent view down Pennsylvania Avenue.

- 4. Hardware: Most fittings and hardware items were auctioned off in the winter of 1968 so there is little original hardware remaining. The guest room hardwood doors do retain their solid brass mortise latch sets.
- 5. Mechanical Equipment:
  - a. Heating, air conditioning and ventilation: The building is heated by the three original oil-fired boilers operating at 15-pound steam pressure. The air-conditioning provided

was mainly through individual room units, though a limited system was installed in 1946 for some public rooms. Most of the ventilation was provided by more passive means, that is, through double-hung windows with operable sashes. Heat gain was controlled by various shading devices such as folding interior shutters, drapes, blinds, shades and exterior awnings.

- b. The electrical service was provided by an open-face switch-gear system.
- c. The original plumbing system, though somewhat altered, is basically still in existence. When the building was constructed in 1901 the city water pressure was not sufficient to pump water to the upper story rooms. As a result a separate pump was installed to carry water to storage tanks in the attic. The water was then gravity fed to the floors below. All pipes are sized from top to bottom. About fifty percent of the original lead pipe soil system is still intact.

The "Willard Hotel" advertised in 1906 that it had one of the first hotel-size hot water heaters in the city. "Runds Instantaneous Heater" provided the hot water for the hotel.

- D. Site: The NEW WILLARD HOTEL, whose main (south) facade fronts on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, was considered to be the first skyscraper to be built in the District. Its location on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue emphasized its prominence in the city. The building follows a pattern of hotels built on this site since 1818. The NEW WILLARD HOTEL replaced several buildings that made up the old "Willard Hotel", including a three, four, five and six story building and a small Greek Revival building next door on F Street. As soon as the 1901 New Willard was completed, Henry A. Willard built the "Occidental Hotel and Restaurant". In 1917 the Washington Hotel was completed. The "Kellogg Building" and "Merchants Bank" constructed on F Street replaced the Greek Revival "Willard Hall", the "Merchants Bank" building being demolished in 1926 for the addition to the WILLARD. An adjacent parking structure was built on F Street and another next to the "Occidental Hotel" in the 1950's and 1960's. The Pennsylvania Avenue garage and "Occidental Hotel and Restaurant" have now been demolished, as will the F Street parking garage, in order to prepare for the restoration and rehabilitation of the NEW WILLARD HOTEL as part of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation's plans for the redevelopment of the Pennsylvania Avenue Historic District.

Because the NEW WILLARD HOTEL is located in a densely built-up urban area the building takes up almost its entire lot, as a result there are few landscape amenities. A cast iron railing runs around part of the Pennsylvania Avenue, 14th Street, and the F Street perimeter of the building protecting the basement level areaway from the sidewalk above. This areaway allowed light into the basement but has been filled in with concrete.

PART III - SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Plans and Drawings on File at the National Archives:

- (1904) F Street Elevation
- (1904) Longitudinal Section  
Addition to the New Willard (Floors B, C, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- (1904) Basement Plan  
Addition to the New Willard
- (1904) Ground Floor Plan  
Addition to the New Willard
- (1904) Basement Areaway  
New Willard Hotel
- (1900) Ground Floor Plan  
Willard's Hotel
- (1900) Plan of Upper Floors  
Willard's Hotel
- (1900) Plan of Steps and Areas  
Pennsylvania Avenue  
Willard's Hotel
- (1900) Section thru 14th Street Front  
Willard's Hotel
- (1912) Platform Seating and Stage Plan for Ballroom  
The New Willard
- (1900) Main Entrance (Pennsylvania Avenue)  
Willard's Hotel
- (1900) Vault Under Sidewalk Plans
- (1900) Square 225 Proposed Vault Plans

B. Old Views:

1. Photocopies of three old views from the Washingtoniana Collection of the Martin Luther King Library, District of Columbia.
2. Photocopies of five old views from the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, District of Columbia.

3. Photocopies of eighteen old views from the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation.

C. Bibliography:

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- b. Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates. "Historical Report". 1978.
- c. Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. "Appendix III: Planning and Design". The Willard Hotel (Parcel 225-A), and Parcel 225-B. 1978.

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b. Articles:

"The Art of the High Building". Architectural Record 15, (1904): p. 445-466.

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The Sunday Star, Washington Star - News, The Washington  
Times and The Washington Times - Herald.

4. Pamphlets, Brochures, Files:

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Files: Clipping files and other materials on the Willard Hotel, and Pennsylvania Avenue, held in the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Files: Clipping files and slides, held by the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.

E. Supplemental Material:

1. Existing Condition Drawings:

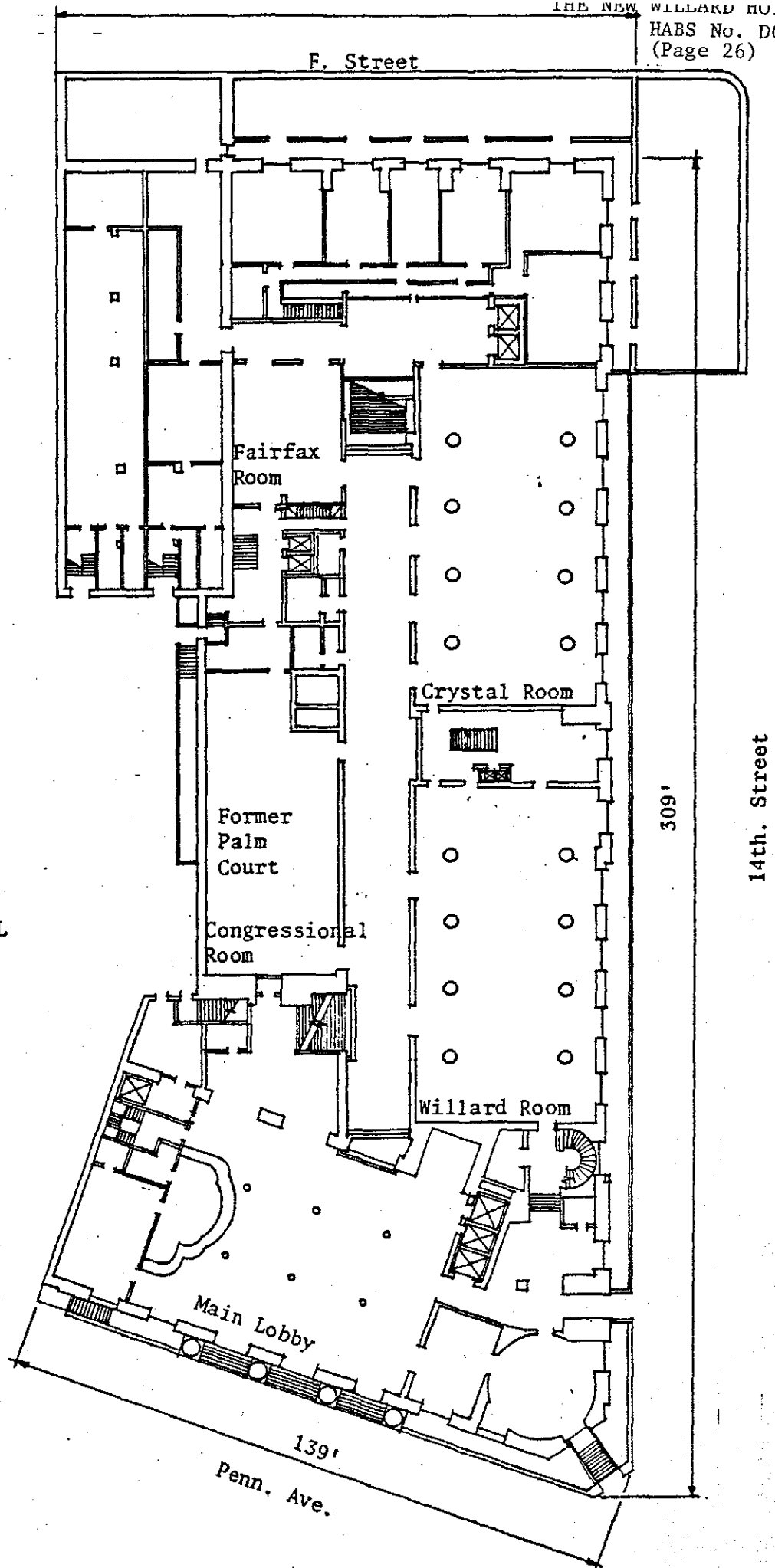
- a. Lobby Level
- b. 2nd-9th Floor Levels
- c. Ballroom Level

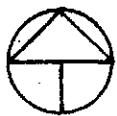
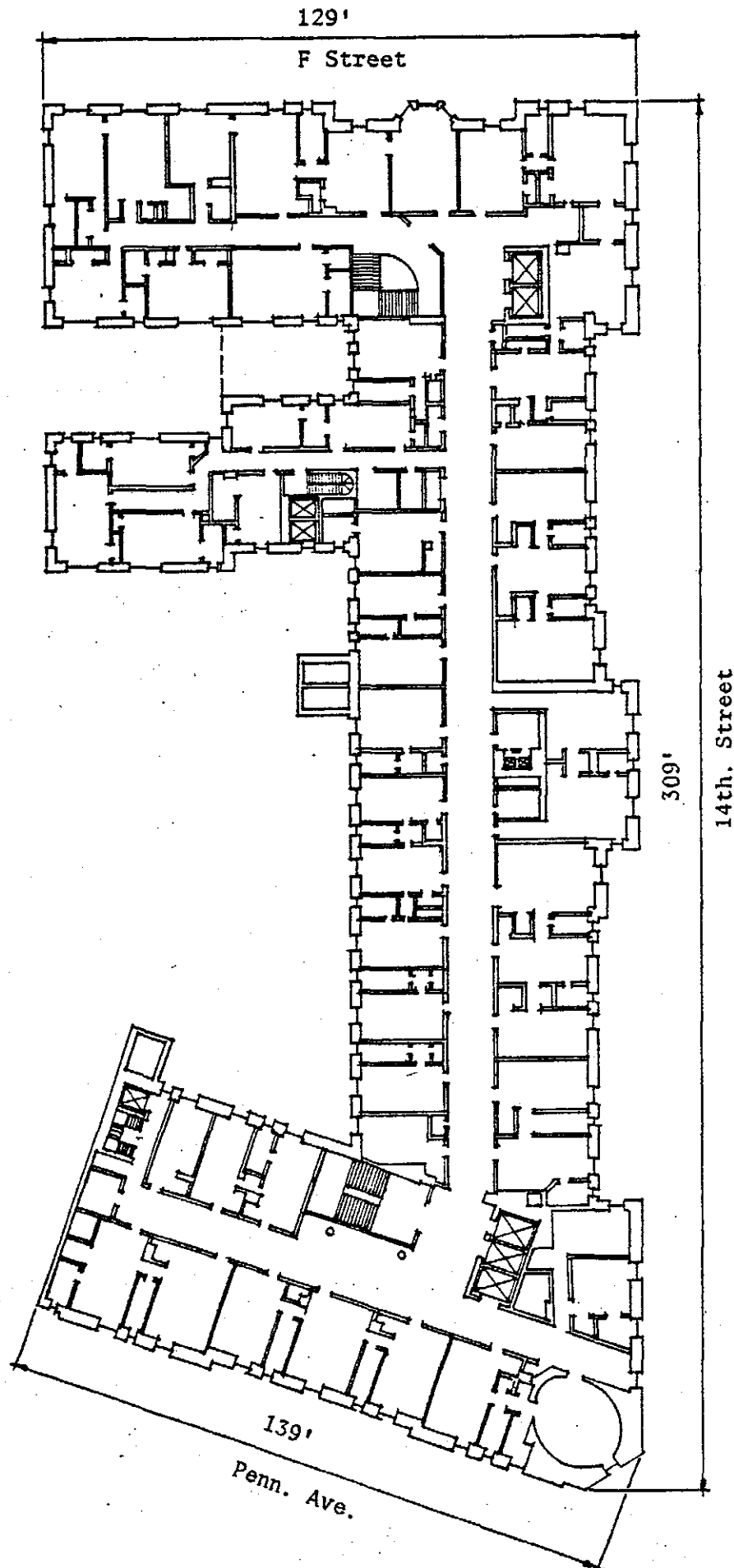
PART IV - PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the completion of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development plan. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS project coordinator. The records were prepared under the general supervision of Jeffrey S. Wolf, Architect with PADC. Historical data was completed by PADC consultants in historic preservation, Anderson Notter/Mariani; documentation written and compiled by Melissa B. Bennett and edited by Bethanie C. Grashof.

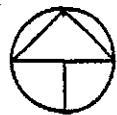


LOBBY LEVEL  
THE WILLARD HOTEL  
Washington, D.C.  
HABS no. DC293  
11-14-80

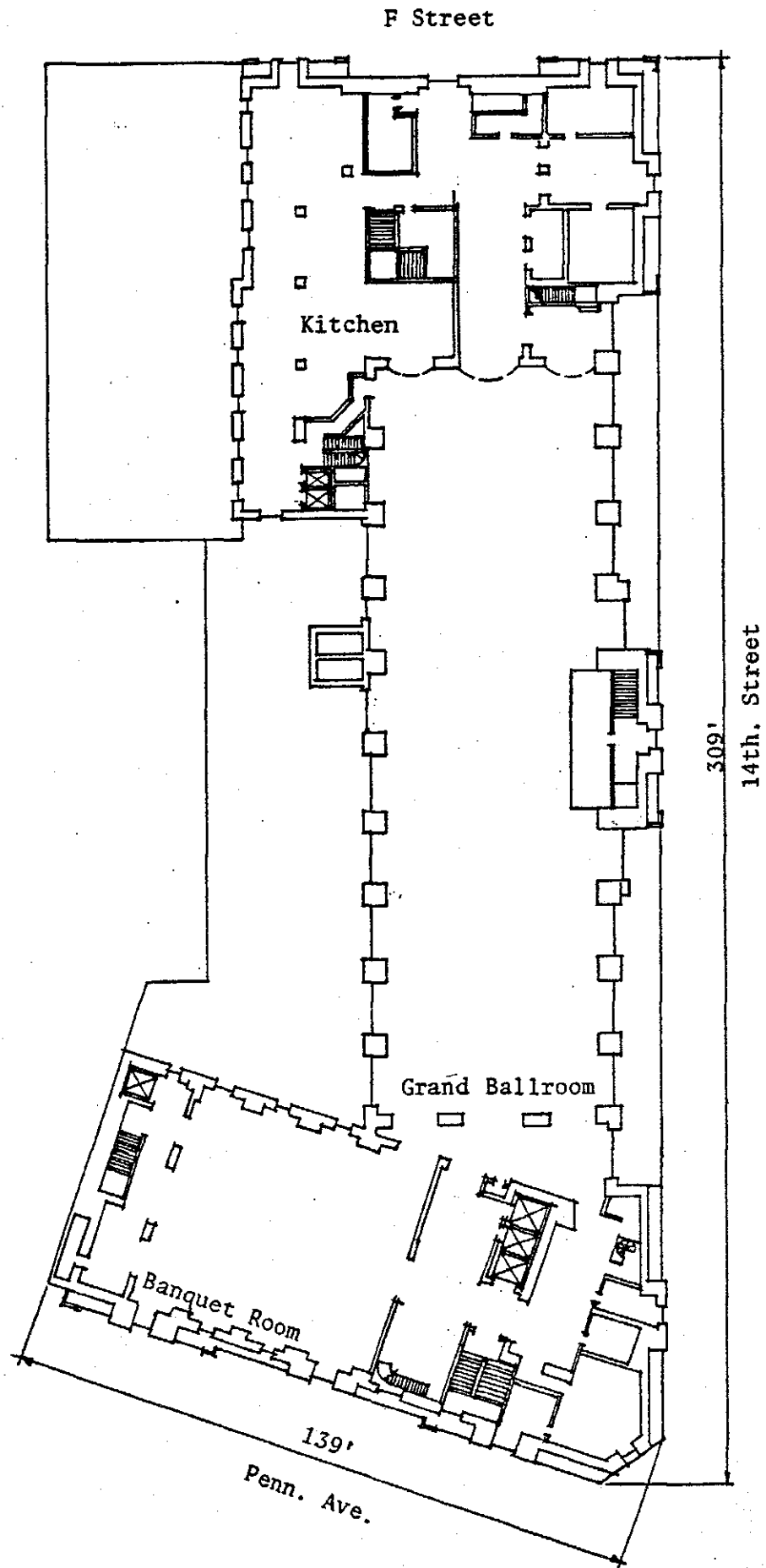




2nd.—9th LEVELS  
THE WILLARD HOTEL  
Washington, D.C.  
HABS no. DC293  
11-14-80



BALLROOM LEVEL  
THE WILLARD HOTEL  
Washington, D.C.  
HABS no. DC293  
11-14-80



ADDENDUM TO  
WILLARD HOTEL  
1401-1409 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-293

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